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What is a Clownfish?

Introduction

Clownfish is a type of saltwater fish which only lives in the warm coral reefs on the ocean floor. There are only thirty species recognized: one is the genus Premnas, while the other twenty nine species are in the genus Amphiprionae. Clownfish are also known as anemone fish or clown anemone fish.

Physical Appearance

People might think clownfish are only white and orange, but the colours of the clownfish can be black, white, yellow, blue or orange. They have stripes, they weigh only a few grams and are about six centimetres long but they can grow up to twelve centimetres. The biggest clownfish is ten to seventeen centimetres. They have an oval-like body shape.

Habitat

Clownfish live in the coral reefs on the ocean floor. They live in the Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, Indo-Malaysian region, South East Asia, Japan and North West Australian waters. Although clownfish can survive without anemones, most clownfish have a host anemone. The clownfish clans the anemone by eating the dead tentacles, attracts larger prey for the anemone and circulates the water. In return, the anemone provides indigested food scraps and protects the clownfish from sharks and eels with it’s venomous tentacles.

Diet

Clownfish are omnivores, which means they eat both plants and seafood. They eat whatever is available near their habitats. Often they eat algae and the leftovers from their host anemone and tiny organisms. Sometimes they also eat the tips of sponge-like corals. Clownfish are like worms because they both eat organic matter but they are different from worms because they live underwater.

Reproduction

All clownfish are born male. It is only the biggest fish in a small clownfish group that can turn itself into a female. After the female has laid it’s eggs on a hard surface, it will force the male to guard it’s eggs. Some females will not let the male eat or rest until the eggs are hatched.

Conclusion

Although clownfish are not in danger, their habitats, the coral reefs, are slowly disappearing because of pollution, overfishing, coral mining and climate change. If people keep harming the coral reefs, many of the creatures will die, not just clownfish.